

Conflict analysis of community rejection and acceptance of PT Geo DIPA Energi's Dieng geothermal working area

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Abstract: The discourse surrounding community acceptance and rejection of PT Geo Dipa Energi's geothermal working area project in Dieng is a significant topic within the sociology of conflict studies. In Indonesia, the development of geothermal working areas offers economic and infrastructural benefits; however, for some communities, the project raises environmental and health concerns. This research aims to examine and analyze the discourse of acceptance and rejection by applying social conflict theory to understand the differences in community responses to the project. It employs a qualitative approach with the symbolic interactionism method to understand how the meanings of acceptance and rejection are formed through social interactions. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation from communities in several villages around the Dieng PLTP. The results indicate that conflicts related to the Dieng PLTP project reflect a clash between economic interests pursued by companies and the government and the social-ecological interests of local communities, who feel threatened by environmental impacts.

Keywords: *Acceptance, Community, Discourse, Geothermal work area, Rejection.*

1. Introduction

The polemic that occurred regarding the development of a Geothermal Power Plant (PLTP) in the Dieng area began when the majority of people whose livelihood was farmers carried out a series of resistance actions. At its peak around 2022, residents who were worried about explosions, exposure to poisonous gas and environmental pollution, launched a series of actions until they reached the mediation stage. In this conflict, the rejection of the development of the PLTP geothermal working area was caused by differences in power and resources of different social classes. Western thinkers such as Marx [1]; Weber [2]; Simmel [3] and Moore [4] viewed, coined, and defined conflict. According to Marx and Engels, conflict arises because of differences that occur, as part of history *"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles"* [5] In this regard, Marx and Engels [5] highlighted that throughout history, various societies have experienced conflicts between different social groups. In the context of the development of the Dieng PLTP area, these differences are based on ownership and access to resources (ownership of Dieng) which collide with two different interests between local communities (landlords and farmers) or government and companies (state projects and workers); In Marx and Engels [5] the powerful and the oppressed are the main factors of conflict that can encourage social and political change.

Then, Max Weber further developed the concept of conflict through analysis of authority and bureaucracy, and how differences in social status and power can trigger disputes. *"Class, status, and party are phenomena of the distribution of power within a community"* (Weber, 1946). The statement emphasizes that social conflict can arise from a variety of different sources, including social status, social class, and political parties or groups. In developing the working area of PLTP PT. Geo Dipa

Energi, the people of Dieng Kulon Village and Dieng Wetan Village can accept and support the project because of its economic benefits. Several people living in Dieng Kulon Village and Dieng Wetan Village were directly involved in the project as workers or contractors. So, they can see opportunities to earn income or improve their standard of living.

Local farmers in Karang Tengah Village, Kepakisan Village, Pekasiran Village and Sikunang Village, who mostly rely on agricultural land and water sources, have concerns that the development of the PT PLTP working area. Geo Dipa Energi can disrupt irrigation and soil quality, which has a negative impact on crop yields and affects their income. In the context of social status, the government and companies generally often hold formal authority in making decisions regarding PLTP PT. Geo Dipa Energy. Meanwhile, the community is placed in a position that does not have the same influence in the decision-making process. This results in feelings of injustice and marginalization. Thus, Weber [2] analysis highlights that the conflict around the Dieng PLTP project is not just about economics, but can involve dimensions of social status, power, and differences in views between the various actors involved.

More specifically, Simmel [3] a German sociologist, sharpened his in-depth view of the dynamics of social interaction in it. The main concept that Simmel developed was the role of conflict in society. Although conflict is generally viewed as something negative and destructive, Simmel [3] argued that conflict actually has a constructive function in society. According to Simmel [3] conflict helps resolve tensions between differences in society and can be a way to achieve a form of unity, although sometimes through the elimination of one of the conflicting parties. Simmel [3] emphasized that conflict not only produces divisions but can also trigger innovation and social change. In the context of the PLTP conflict, the development of geothermal working areas is seen as a dynamic that ultimately encourages society to develop and adapt to new circumstances. In other words, conflict can be a catalyst for social evolution, driving renewal and adjustment in social structures and norms.

In the latest context, Moore [4] in his book *“Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital”* (2015), introduces an innovative approach that combines Marxist conflict analysis with ecological studies. Moore introduced the concept *“web of life”* or network of life to describe the relationship between social, economic and ecological processes [4]. Thus, Moore's view can be used as a theoretical basis for the Dieng PLTP conflict which is currently occurring. Furthermore, Moore argues that capitalism not only exploits workers but also exploits nature as an unlimited resource [4]. Moore introduced the term *“Capitalocene”* as an alternative to the era *“Anthropocene”*. *Capitalocene* emphasizes that the ecological crisis being faced is not caused by human activity in general, but by the specific dynamics of capitalism [4]. So, Moore asserts that the capitalist system is responsible for large-scale ecological damage.

In his analysis, Moore integrates political economy with ecology, showing how capitalism regulates ecological relationships to maximize capital accumulation [4]. It highlights how capitalism functions through *“cheap nature”* (cheap nature), where nature and human labor are overexploited for maximum profit [4]. Draft *“cheap nature”* became a core concept of Moore's framework, in which capitalism relies on the overexploitation of nature and human labor to maximize capital accumulation. Moore identified four main components *cheap nature*; cheap food, cheap labor, cheap energy, and cheap raw materials [4]. From these four components, according to Moore [4] capitalism continuously looks for ways to secure and renew cheap resources to maintain its economic growth. So that in the process the conflict has a constructive side. Moore sees conflict as an integral part of the dynamics of capitalism that operates through and with nature. In his conclusion, Moore explains that social and ecological conflict often results in ecological justice movements that seek to redistribute natural resources more fairly and reduce the negative impacts of capitalist exploitation on certain communities [4].

The reality of the conflict of acceptance and rejection that occurred regarding the development of PLTP in the Dieng region was based on differences in views. An individual's subjective decision to accept or reject something is influenced by the perspective and understanding formed through social

interaction; Foucault [6] calls it 'discourse'. Discourse is “a way of talking about understanding the world that influences how individuals can see themselves and others” Foucault [6]. Foucault [7] argued that power and knowledge cannot be separated because power produces knowledge and knowledge produces power; in other words, the relationship between the two is dialectical.

In his book “*Discipline and Punish*” Foucault [7] shows how disciplinary practices shape individuals as subjects of knowledge through mechanisms of social control and supervision “power is not something that is possessed, but something that is exercised in social relations” [7]. So, according to Foucault, discourse is not just a reflection of reality but also an active tool in the formation of reality itself. In “*The Archaeology of Knowledge*” (1972), Foucault explains that “discourse is a system of thought that spreads in society and regulates the way we talk and think about the world”. In short, discourse creates a framework that influences how to categorize, understand, and interact with the world or environment around us.

In the context of acceptance and rejection, Foucault's discourse theory can be used to understand how dominant narratives and power structures influence individual subjective decisions. It is the dominant discourse that can ultimately determine what is considered 'normal' or 'abnormal', 'right' or 'wrong', which in turn influences how individuals accept or reject certain ideas, norms and practices. “we must reveal the discourses hidden behind social practices that appear neutral and objective” [6]. Thus, analysis of discourse practices can reveal how power works through knowledge to shape subjectivity in individual decisions.

The different perspectives in accepting and rejecting geothermal work areas will certainly be very interesting for at least three things, namely; First, differences in perspectives in accepting and rejecting often involve complex and interacting factors that not only include direct impacts on the local economy and environment, but also involve social dimensions such as public health, social structure and local culture. For example, people in Dieng Kulon Village and Dieng Wetan Village see the construction of PLTP as an opportunity for economic progress and infrastructure improvement, while people in Karang Tengah Village, Kepakisan Village, Pekasiran Village, and Sikunang Village are worried about the negative impact on agricultural land and health due to the potential toxic gas leak. Second, the involvement of various actors with different interests. Discourse involving various actors such as local communities, government, companies and media; each brings different perspectives, interests, and power. The government, for example, has an interest in developing renewable energy as part of the General National Energy Plan (RUEN) which aims to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. On the same hand, PT Geo Dipa Energi (Persero) has an interest in project sustainability and economic benefits. Meanwhile, local communities have a direct interest in agriculture or welfare to improve their quality of life, which can be at stake with geothermal working area development projects. Third, the discussion of 'discourse' is an interesting discussion because it analyzes how the subject speaks and understands the world, which can influence how individuals see themselves and others or how individuals respond and react to events and happenings. So, the dominant discourse can determine what is considered 'normal' or 'abnormal', 'right' or 'wrong', which ultimately influences how individuals accept or reject geothermal work area projects.

This study then tries to prove how acceptance and rejection of geothermal working area projects is not only the result of the objective impacts caused by the project, but also the result of complex social construction involving various actors with different interests, power and perspectives. through analysis of the conflict dynamics that occurred in the PT Geo Dipa Energi geothermal working area development project, with a focus on the community around the Dieng PLTP who generally rejected the project. Through a conflict sociology approach, this research can provide a rich and comprehensive perspective to understand how community acceptance and rejection of geothermal projects is not only based on real and visible impacts but also on other complex factors.

2. Method

The type of research used is a qualitative study with a symbolic interactionism approach to understanding how meaning or symbols are formed through the dynamics of social interaction, where "qualitative research is not just about using words, but involves certain perspectives and methods to investigate qualitative aspects from human experience" [8]. This approach emphasizes that social reality is understood through a process of symbolic interpretation, with individuals actively involved in forming meaning through social interaction [9]. Conflict and social construction theories are used to provide deeper insight into the experiences of groups or individuals regarding the acceptance or rejection of geothermal projects, as well as the social and cultural context behind them. In addition, discourse analysis is applied to understand how language shapes social reality, by examining varied symbols and meanings through the concepts of construction, functionality and variability [10]. This research focuses on the Dieng geothermal work area managed by PT Geo Dipa Energi, with a focus on villages that accept and reject geothermal projects. A triangulation approach was used to ensure data validity through combining various methods, including interviews, observation, literature study, and documentation. In addition, discourse analysis will explore how language is used to shape people's perceptions of the project, as well as its impact on the policies and actions taken. By using critical discourse analysis, this research aims to reveal power dynamics in public communication and provide recommendations for more inclusive and fair communication strategies [11].

Table 1.
Profile of Respondents.

Name	Status/Title	Age	Gender	Jobs
Ahmad Shidiq	Development Section Head of Keajar Sub-district, Wonosobo Regency	Not mentioned	Male	PNS Sub-district
Distribute	To Sikung Hamlet, Pursue Subdistrict	48 Years	Male	Hamlet Head
Class of Belarus	Head of Batur Subdistrict, Banjarnegara Regency	Not mentioned	Male	Head of Sub-district
Khoris	Head of Pawuhan Hamlet, Batur Sub-district	Not mentioned	Male	Hamlet Head

3. Results and Discussion

Based on research conducted in several villages around the Dieng geothermal working area (PLTP) managed by PT Geo Dipa Energi, it was found that there were differences in attitudes between people who supported and rejected the PLTP development project. This attitude is influenced by various factors, including local economic conditions, concerns about environmental impacts, and social and power relations between local communities and companies or the government. The following is a table of findings that describes the views (acceptance and rejection perspectives) of the community.

Table 2.
Interview Results Regarding the Acceptance and Rejection of the Geo Dipa Geothermal Power Plant Project.

Name	Node	Sub-node/Tema	Description/Remarks
Ahmad Shidiq	Attitude Toward the Project	Kejajar Community, Wonosobo	The community in Kejajar, especially the village where the interviewee is located, tends to accept the Geo Dipa PLTP project.
		Banjarnegara Community	Some people in Banjarnegara Regency reject this project, especially regarding the environmental impact and the desire for compensation bigger.
	Reason for Acceptance	Understanding Geographical Conditions	The community understands that Dieng is an active volcanic area and sees PLTP as a solution to reduce potential volcanic disasters.
		Jobs	The presence of the PLTP project provides employment opportunities for local communities, although limited on unskilled jobs.
	Reasons for Refusal	Environmental Impact Concerns	Concerns about negative impacts on natural resources, especially water quality and damage to ecosystems around.
		Negative Perception	Some individuals spread negative information that influences public perception towards the project.
		Expectation of Greater Compensation	The community wants greater compensation or other benefits from the presence of the PLTP project, especially for those who affected.
Distribute	Community Acceptance	The majority accept	Most of the residents of Sikunang Hamlet accepted the presence of the Geo Dipa PLTP project after more intensive socialization.
		Initial Pros and Cons	At first, there were pros and cons regarding this project among the community, especially related to environmental aspects, but most residents agreed receive
	Reasons for Initial Rejection	Negative Impact Concerns	Concerns about potential negative impacts such as leaks, explosions, water and air pollution which could disrupt agriculture and people's daily life.
		Changes in Culture and Tradition	Concerns about changes in community culture and traditions due to modernization brought about by the Geo PLTP project Dipa.
Class of Belarus	Community Acceptance	General Admission	In general, the people in Batur District accept the existence of the Geo Dipa PLTP project, which has been ongoing for some time decades.
		Continuous Acceptance	Acceptance of this project has been ongoing, demonstrating strong support consistency from society.
	Reason for Acceptance	Electrical Energy Needs	The community sees the PLTP project as a solution to the high demand for electrical energy in Indonesia, which is supportive their survival.
		Good Relationship with the Company	The relationship that exists between the management (Geo Dipa) and the community is very good, including various activities involved society directly.
	Rejection Issues	Rejecting Group	Some community groups still do not fully accept this

Khoris			project, possibly due to lack of optimal communication between companies and society.
		Communication that is not yet optimal	The issue of rejection by some people is caused by communication that is not yet optimal, which leads to misunderstanding or worry which is not fully answered.
	Community Acceptance	General Admission	In general, the people of Pawuhan Hamlet accept the presence of the Geo Dipa PLTP project, even though there are limitations in its benefits felt.
	Rejection Issues	Environmental Impact Concerns	Several community groups are concerned about environmental damage, especially regarding the impact of project activities on natural resources and ecosystem.
		Less Effective Communication	Communication between Geo Dipa and the community is still lacking, especially in terms of socialization regarding project impacts and plans.
	Conflict Resolution	Slow in Responding to Complaints	Resolving conflicts or community complaints related to projects tends to be slow and unresponsive on the part of parties Geo Dipa.
		Unequal Treatment	There is a difference in treatment between people who support and those who reject the project, which can cause dissatisfaction and social tension.

Based on these results, if analyzed using Marx [1] theory of social conflict, which highlights the tension between the ruling class (companies and government) and the oppressed class (local communities). So local communities around the Dieng PLTP area, most of whom depend on natural resources for survival, feel threatened by the environmental impacts caused by PLTP projects, especially related to damage to agricultural land and water quality. In contrast, companies and governments focus more on economic benefits and energy sustainability, which the authorities believe will bring greater benefits to the country, although often ignoring the negative impacts on local communities.

Companies and governments, as the ruling class, control access to natural resources (geothermal) and prioritize the expansion of renewable energy to support economic growth. On the other hand, people who rely on agriculture and natural resources for their livelihoods feel marginalized in the decision-making process. They feel that the existence of this project threatens their survival, while the promised economic benefits are limited to employment which is not enough to improve their quality of life.

According to Marx, class conflict is a form of conflict of interests between groups that control resources and those that depend on them. Local communities want greater compensation and attention to environmental sustainability, while the authorities are more focused on capital accumulation through natural exploitation which is considered cheap and unlimited. This creates deep inequalities, where capitalism functions to benefit a few while sacrificing the well-being of local communities.

So, the Dieng PLTP project illustrates how capitalism exploits nature and labor for economic gain. The inequality of power between society and companies leads to feelings of marginalization and social injustice. Thus, Marx's view of conflict can explain that the polemics and series of acts of resistance to the development of PLTP areas not only reflect class conflict in an economic context, but also symbolically create social tensions that can encourage social change in the form of awareness of inequality and the struggle for rights. fairer rights.

Max Weber developed the concept of conflict through analysis of social status, power and bureaucracy. According to Weber [2] power in a society does not only come from control of economic resources but also social status and bureaucratic authority which determine who has the ability to influence decisions and arrangements of social life.

In the context of the Geothermal Power Plant (PLTP) project in Dieng, we can see an imbalance of power in decision making. The parties who have authority and power in this project are the company (Geo Dipa) and the government, while local communities have limited power. Decisions regarding the development of PLTP projects are taken by parties at higher levels (government and companies) who often do not involve the community directly in the decision-making process (Toha, Khoris). Local communities, especially farmers, do not have equal access to such power, leading to feelings of injustice and marginalization.

Weber stated that social status and power play an important role in determining who can participate in the decision-making process. In the case of PLTP Dieng, the majority of people with low social status (farmers, working class) are often placed in a subordinate position, where their voices in determining policies that will have a direct impact on their lives are often ignored. This results in inequality in the distribution of project benefits, and even further, differences in access to information and compensation received (Shidiq, Khoris, Aji).

As a result of this inequality, social resistance arises which is triggered by injustice in the distribution of power. Weber [2] suggested that communication and bureaucracy are the main channels for resolving these inequalities. However, in this case, suboptimal communication and a lack of transparency regarding project compensation and benefits further exacerbated tensions between those in power (companies and government) and those on the margins (local communities).

Georg Simmel further provides a more positive perspective on conflict in society. Although conflict is often viewed as a destructive division, Simmel [3] argued that conflict can also have a constructive function. According to him, conflict is a catalyst for social change that encourages society to adapt to existing changes and form new social norms. In the context of the Dieng PLTP project, although there is social tension between local communities and the company/government, this conflict has the potential to be a catalyst for constructive social change. One of the changes that can occur is in terms of social adaptation and the formation of new social norms that pay more attention to the balance between the economy and the environment. Communities that were previously shackled to a more traditional social framework are now starting to adapt to the new norms established by the PLTP project, such as more open communication, participation in decision making, and increased transparency regarding the benefits and impacts of the project. These conflicts can be a process of social evolution, in which societies learn to negotiate with greater powers and seek to fight for their rights within a broader framework of social change. For example, communities opposing PLTP projects are starting to organize themselves in social movements to advocate for ecological justice and fair compensation for the impacts they experience. Through this process, communities gain a stronger understanding of their rights and are better prepared to face greater social challenges in the future.

Moore [4] in his work *Capitalism in the Web of Life* (2015), suggests that capitalism works through what he calls "cheap nature", namely the exploitation of nature as an unlimited cheap resource for capital accumulation. Within the framework of capitalism, nature, like labor, is seen as a resource that can be exploited without taking into account long-term costs or ecological damage.

The application of this theory to the Dieng PLTP project shows how nature is exploited for economic gain in the form of providing renewable energy, which has the potential to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. However, the exploitation of nature that occurs, especially in the context of PLTP infrastructure development, shows ecological damage which is often ignored by the parties involved, both government and companies (Geo Dipa). Negative impacts such as water pollution and ecosystem damage caused by the development of the Dieng PLTP are part of the capitalist process that uses nature without taking into account long-term ecological impacts.

Moore [4] emphasizes that capitalism not only exploits cheap labor, but also exploits nature through "cheap nature", where natural resources are taken without providing fair compensation to the affected communities. In the context of the Dieng PLTP, communities that depend on groundwater and agriculture feel the direct ecological impacts of the project. Those who support the project often see it in terms of energy benefits and job potential, while those who oppose the project feel threatened by the environmental damage it will cause, which could potentially ruin their lives as farmers.

Through the concept of "cheap nature", Moore suggests that the exploitation of nature by companies such as Geo Dipa not only harms the environment but also creates social injustice for affected local communities. Local communities who do not have access to the project's economic benefits feel that they have been exploited in this process, as those directly affected do not receive comparable benefits.

4. Conclusion

The conflict that occurred related to the Dieng PLTP project not only reflects the struggle between economic interests and social-ecological interests, but also implies the dynamics of social status and power in decision making that affect the lives of local communities. Marx's views clearly illustrate how the conflict between social classes is connected to access to natural resources. Companies and governments, which have the power to access and exploit natural resources (geothermal), focus on economic profits and energy sustainability, while local communities who rely on natural resources for their livelihoods feel threatened by the environmental impacts they cause.

Through Weber's theory, we understand that differences in social status and power often give rise to inequalities that exacerbate conflict. From Simmel's perspective, this conflict can also be seen as a catalyst for constructive social change, forcing society to adapt to new social-ecological conditions. Meanwhile, from Moore's perspective, the exploitation of nature in the Dieng PLTP project reflects the principle of "cheap nature", where nature is used as a cheap resource for capital accumulation, ignoring the ecological damage and social injustice caused by the project.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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